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Chapter 1

THE RULER OF THE NATIONS

We've all heard the nursery rhyme of Humpty Dumpty. It's about an egg who sat on a wall. And, as fate would have it, he had a great fall off that wall. While he sat up on that wall, he was on top of the world. He was doing okay. He had arrived at a precipice affording him a great and majestic view.

However, something went cataclysmically wrong for Mr. Dumpty. He fell off the wall. We don't have the particulars on what knocked him off. It could be that he was pushed, or maybe a gust of wind came along. Perhaps he got distracted and lost his balance. But what we do know is who he went to for help to try to get his life back on target. He didn't go to his family. He didn't go to his friends. He didn't go to the banker. Rather, he went to the White House. He went to the government.

The king got involved. He was so impacted by Mr. Dumpty's calamity that he called a meeting of Congress—all the king's men then got involved. Congress created and passed the "Fix Mr. Dumpty Law." I'm sure they also provided all the necessary funds and stimulus to put

Mr. Dumpty back together again. After all, it was widely known how shattered things had become.

All of this sounds like a solution up to this point. But the tragedy of the nursery rhyme is in how it concludes. All the king's horses and all the king's men did their best to put Humpty back together again. The most powerful people in the land, who had access to the greatest funding potential in society, were unable to fix the problem. Despite the valiant attempts to do good for Humpty, the egg remained cracked and broken. Apparently, a broken system was unable to fix a broken man whose world had been shattered.

It doesn't take a genius today to see that Humpty Dumpty remains shattered. In communities all over our nation and nations throughout the world, there is the shattering of hopes and dreams. There is a shattering of lives, communities, and property. Among this shattering, we face the inevitable uprising of class warfare, cultural warfare, and political warfare. Yet despite the funds to fix it, despite the responsibility to address it, all the king's horses and all the king's men have not been able to put Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Maybe it's because they really do not understand why Mr. Dumpty was broken in the first place. Maybe the politicians and the White House can't address the calamity and the brokenness successfully because they have been caught in what the Temptations used to sing—a "ball of confusion." In fact, that's what it seems the whole world is caught up in today. We have chaos on every continent and confusion in every nation. We have a global health pandemic, a racial pandemic, a spending pandemic, a debt pandemic, a military pandemic, and more wherever you look.

A SPIRITUAL PANDEMIC

Beneath these pandemics, though, lies the greatest pandemic of all. It's a spiritual pandemic. And if we don't get this one fixed right, then

we won't have the cultural glue necessary to make Mr. Dumpty whole again. The Bible makes it clear that everything physical and visible is preceded by that which is invisible and spiritual. If you want to correct the physical and the visible, you must identify and address the invisible and spiritual. If all you see is what you see, you do not see all there is to be seen. The calamity we face today is because there has been an unaddressed spiritual issue, first and foremost by the church, which has then bled into the culture. If we fail to fix the spiritual, it doesn't matter how many king's horses and how many king's men attempt to help Mr. Dumpty's situation throughout our precious land.

This principle is made clear in 2 Chronicles 15:3–6 where we read,

For many days Israel was without the true God and without a teaching priest and without law. But in their distress they turned to the LORD God of Israel, and they sought Him, and He let them find Him. In those times there was no peace to him who went out or to him who came in, for many disturbances afflicted all the inhabitants of the lands. Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every kind of distress.

Please note that the chaos the nations were facing was caused by God Himself. This was the case because He had been marginalized by idolatry (“no true God”), there existed ecclesiastical failure (“no teaching priests”), and there was an absence of a fixed divine standard by which reality would be measured (“no law”). When nations depart from God, they face the consequences of God's divine passive wrath of abandonment. This results in nations, as well as their citizens, finding themselves experiencing the negative effects of evil, which then increasingly leads to the ongoing devolution of society. These nations experience an ever-rising amount of conflict personally, nationally, and internationally. Scripture is clear that God is the sovereign ruler over His creation (Ps. 96:10).

The biblical doctrine of sovereignty helps us grasp this truth more fully. Essentially, this doctrine makes it clear that God both rules and He overrules. Scripture is replete with this reality:

“But He is unique and who can turn Him?
And what His soul desires, that He does.” (Job 23:13)

“I know that You can do all things,
And that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted.” (Job 42:2)

Whatever the LORD pleases, He does,
In heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deeps. (Ps. 135:6)

The LORD has made everything for its own purpose,
Even the wicked for the day of evil. (Prov. 16:4)

“Even from eternity I am He,
And there is none who can deliver out of My hand;
I act and who can reverse it?” (Isa. 43:13)

“The One forming light and creating darkness,
Causing well-being and creating calamity;
I am the LORD who does all these.” (Isa. 45:7)

We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined
according to His purpose who works all things after the coun-
sel of His will. (Eph. 1:11)

Then I heard something like the voice of a great multitude and
like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty
peals of thunder, saying,

“Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty, reigns.”
(Rev. 19:6)

So Pilate said to Him, “You do not speak to me? Do You not know that I have authority to release You, and I have authority to crucify You?” Jesus answered, “You would have no authority over Me, unless it had been given you from above; for this reason he who delivered Me to you has the greater sin.”
(John 19:10–11)

This sovereignty also includes God’s rulership over nations as we see here:

“It is He who changes the times and the epochs;
He removes kings and establishes kings;
He gives wisdom to wise men
And knowledge to men of understanding.” (Dan. 2:21)

The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of the
LORD;
He turns it wherever He wishes. (Prov. 21:1)

And he said, “O LORD, the God of our fathers, are You not God in the heavens? And are You not ruler over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You.” (2 Chron. 20:6)

For the kingdom is the LORD’s
And He rules over the nations. (Ps. 22:28)

When the spiritual is out of alignment, then the social, political, economic, technological, and environmental areas of life become

chaotic. The good news is that when people and nations return to God relationally under His kingdom rulership, He can bring order and peace to a chaotic environment (2 Chron. 15:4, 15).

That's why the story we read in Genesis 11 is so relevant not only to our contemporary culture but also to the world at large. God established national boundaries in which mankind is to live (Acts 17:26). This was God's way of subduing the world to His glory. At the Tower of Babel, men rebelled against God's plan for geographical decentralization by seeking to establish a unified global community independent of God. He judged their attempt at globalization independent of Him. If you've gone to church for any length of time, or have read your Bible, then you know this story. We're told in the opening verses that the whole earth used the same language at that time. God had given them an imperative through a divine instruction to scatter and "fill the earth" (Gen. 9:1). There was to be no globalization apart from Him, or one-world government independent of His sovereign rule. Rather, there was to be the breakdown of nations so that they would remain in a state of divine dependency on Him as the Creator, Controller, Sustainer, and Ruler of all nations, empires, and people (Acts 17:24–47).

But as the population began to grow, they did not seek to fulfill God's mandate of filling the earth. Instead, they chose to settle. We read,

Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. (Gen. 11:1–2)

Let me start by saying a word about *east*. In the book of Genesis, to travel east meant to journey away from God. When Adam and Eve sinned, they were moved to the east (Gen. 3:24). When Cain was removed from the presence of God, he traveled east (Gen. 3:16). When the people and nations "journeyed east" in order to settle, they were

moving away from God while simultaneously ignoring His mandate to populate the earth as distinct national entities (see Genesis 10).

Once they settled, they came up with an idea for how to create a place for them to live. We read in the next two verses,

They said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks and burn them thoroughly.” And they used brick for stone, and they used tar for mortar. They said, “Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.” (vv. 3–4)

God told them to scatter and cover the earth. But they opted for their own plan. They decided that rather than scatter their resources and strength abroad, they would consolidate their power. They wanted to consolidate their purpose by establishing their own civilization, culture, self-definition, and man-centered religious order. They wanted to build a global society that would erase the Creator-creature distinction and dependence.

In doing so, they wanted to remove the divine oversight of national identity and mandate that had been established, and enact their own rules for how civilization, culture, and government would operate. They wanted to set the rules and come up with their own plan. So they took the bricks combined with tar and set about creating a technology to do so. In that day, these building materials would have been their technology. It was what they had in order to advance civilization so that, in their minds at least, God would no longer be necessary. Theocracy (the rule of God) would be replaced by homocracy (the rule of man). Thus they began the plan to create their own Babel.

The citizens and government of Babel decided to pool their power and resources in order to build a world independent of divine

structure. Keep in mind, whenever you use technology to create independence from God, you have joined the rebellion of Satan. In fact, governments that try to consolidate universal power are really joining Satan and the anti-Christ. According to Revelation 13:15–18, the system of the anti-Christ is predicated on the whole world economy being entwined. In this way, the anti-Christ would control it all and set up his own evil “kingdom” agenda (Isa. 14:12–14). His is an agenda independent of the directive God gave to create national dependency on Him.

To start, the inhabitants focused on building a city. This city would serve as the capital for the entire human race, since they had decided to settle in one area rather than disperse throughout the world. It was an effort to establish global unity independent of God’s sovereign rule. Thus, they opted to build a civilization apart from God. We call that mindset *humanism*. Humanism is where man seeks to replace God in order to define life and its meaning, purpose, and responsibility on their own.

But since the leadership of the new civilization recognized the importance of religion, they decided to build a tower in the middle of the city. This tower would be known as a ziggurat and would serve as a staircase to heaven. They wanted this tower to help them establish a humanistic religious order that would satisfy the human need to believe in something bigger than themselves. They didn’t want to look to God, but they wanted to become “god” by letting earth dictate to heaven. In this way they could focus on astrology or other interpretations of God’s created order in an effort to define and direct their own paths. They wanted to define themselves by themselves as the objects of ultimate worship where mankind became the central connection between heaven and earth.

They wanted to create a doctrine that made belief in and submission to a sovereign God unnecessary, whether that was through evolution, or the spark of divinity, or materialism, greed, technology, or

even medical advancement. They wanted to establish their own created order that left God out of His rightful position as ruler over all. And rather than connect with the Divine who comes from heaven to earth, they wanted to create their own religious connection from earth up to heaven. What's more, they wanted to be part of the applause when it was all said and done. They wanted their name carved onto a sign, into the building—to be remembered throughout all of history. As we saw in verse 4, they said, “And let us make for ourselves a name,” so that they would not become scattered all over the earth. They thought that a one-world global community and government could eradicate the need for God because of the power of their collective unity.

In the context of Scripture, a name symbolizes a definition of what something is. To name something was akin to establishing governance over it. When God told Adam to name all the animals, God was setting Adam in a position of governance and responsibility over the animals that he named. That's one reason why God would change the name of a person who had changed their relationship to Him in Scripture. The name change signified a new identity and allegiance.

I've done my share of weddings over the years and in every wedding, the wife has changed her last name. It's a symbol of responsibility that the husband carries for the wife in order for him to properly govern her well-being. When the citizenry of Babel said they wanted to establish their own name, they were declaring their rebellion. They were declaring they wanted independence from God. They did not want to be defined or confined by a theocratic relationship with the Creator. Rather, they wanted a world they could run and own according to their own will and desires. They wanted to imitate God without yielding to Him.

What you and I are seeing today in our broken culture is a society that has been progressively imitating deity. We are witnessing a culture that has sought to define itself for itself, and not under God. Decisions and allegiances are made based on what people think, feel,

or say and no longer based on God's solid Word. God rejects national and international covenants and alliances that leave Him out.

Children are being taught about self-definition in institutions where truth is jettisoned to the curb. Their understanding of *right* and *wrong* has been redefined. In fact, in so many situations what used to be "right" is now considered "wrong" and what used to be "wrong" is now considered "right" (Isa. 5:20). People are choosing their gender apart from what God has called them and created them. They choose their family structure apart from the way God intended the family to be. And they do this out of an illegitimate definition of freedom that they created themselves.

The problem is that regardless of what they think, say, or try to create, they are still dependent upon a Creator. If God were to simply reduce the oxygen flowing to any of their brains, the party would be over. Everything and everyone depends upon God. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all life. The most people can do apart from God is simply rearrange what He has already made. And whenever that takes place, it amounts to nothing more, and nothing less, than a cosmic rebellion. That can happen with an individual. It can happen with a rebellious family or a rebellious wife or a rebellious husband. It can happen with rebellious pastors. It can happen with rebellious politicians. It can happen with a rebellious president, and even with entire nations. You can pick the category yourself, but anytime someone seeks to place themselves in a position of governance outside of God's rule, it's rebellion. It is setting themselves up to make a name for themselves by demanding independence.

And while the people in Babel may have marveled at their own creation as their tower became taller and taller each day, it never grew so tall that God didn't have to come down in order to look at it Himself. Genesis 11:5 states it like this, "The LORD came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built." God came down. Despite the fact that those building the tower stated that their

goal was for it to reach clear to the heavens. Apparently, the heavens were out of reach for them because God still had to “come down” just to see what they were doing. Rather than invade God’s space, as was their intention, God invaded theirs.

This is a great reminder for all of us. No matter how high any person or nation gets, it will never reach heaven. God sits high above the earth in a space humanity cannot reach, even with fancy space-ships or rockets. As the prophet Isaiah said, the nations are nothing before God (Isa. 40:15–24).

God came down to investigate what the people were doing in Babel, and when He did, He said, “Behold, they are one people, and they all have the same language. And this is what they began to do, and now nothing which they purpose to do will be impossible for them,” (Gen. 11:6). This one statement by God is the single greatest testament to the power of unity. Here we see the Creator of the universe declaring that if the people stay together, they will be unstoppable. He said this because of the dominion mandate given in Genesis 1. When God delegated the rule of earth to mankind, it would be for good or ill. He determined to release humanity in such a way that our ability to rule could be great. If humanity rules under His overarching rule, He gives freedom. But if humanity chooses to rule independently of God, then the chaos they would invite would be like nothing they could imagine.

Thus, if God allowed humanity to become globally unified, independent of Him as God and Ruler over all, the rebellion and damage that would take place would be enormous. The chaos on earth would be unstoppable due to their sinful, anti-God global unity agenda. What we are witnessing today in America, and possibly even throughout the world (i.e., the United Nations), is what it looks like when humanity gets together in order to rebel against God. In fact, I’ll go so far as to say that the United Nations is the contemporary expression of the Tower of Babel seeking to bring peace and international unity apart from the God of the Bible. International cooperation is one thing. Heading

toward developing a global and one-world government is another. That's the spiritual pandemic in which we now find ourselves.

Rather than allow the self-perpetuated carnage to erupt from humanity's rebellion, God opted for a strategy to limit the scope of this initial rebellion. He gave that strategy in the next two verses of Genesis 11, which read,

“Come, let Us go down there and confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech.” So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. (vv. 7–8)

God set in motion a “ball of confusion.” He mixed things up so that there would not be any real, meaningful way to communicate. This was introduced in order to prevent the population from seeking to rebel collectively and thus invite unbridled calamity and destruction as a result of their departure from God.

Today we are experiencing the failure to communicate in any meaningful way among groups who are divided racially, politically, or through any number of ways. Sure, everyone is talking. But few are listening. The reason is because way back at Babel, God intentionally confused the language. It is something He has done and continues to do whenever any part or people or nation of His creation becomes too big for their britches. Any time a group rises up to declare themselves the rulers with final say apart from God's overarching rule, God allows the ball of confusion to do its work. He allows confusing and impossible situations to create panic. In this way, He seeks to remind them who is the ultimate Ruler over all.

As a result of confusing their language at Babel, God then scattered them all over the earth. In doing so, He fulfilled the mandate He had initially asked them to live out. God will accomplish His plan with or without our cooperation. His plan is for the church to serve

as a model of what an individual nation should look like based on our biblical worldview and unity. We are to then seek to transfer a biblical worldview to other nations through the proclamation of the gospel, good works, and a comprehensive view of discipleship.

Let me just say it is better when we cooperate with God up front rather than forcing His hand in order to “come down” and intervene in our rebellion. He does this to force people and nations to have to learn to turn to Him. Believers are commanded to disciple the nations, not just individuals in the nations. This involves impacting and affecting the systems and structures that affect the nations (Matt. 28:19).

God is not shy on where to place blame for the consequences of humanity’s rebellion. Twice in the passage in Genesis 11 He tells us that it is “the LORD” who scattered them all over the earth. He didn’t want us to miss that if you mess with Him, it comes at a price. And if you and I want to honestly know why we have the problems we are facing in our world today—why we can’t seem to fix the social crisis, the racial crisis, the health crisis—we may want to take a look at “the LORD.” Because if God is our problem, then only God is our solution. We can make all the mandates, precautions, sensitivity classes, economic stimulus packages, and international summits that we want, but if it is a spiritual root that is rotting, we need to return to God in order to solve the issues at hand. God will not allow our nation, or any nation, to solve its problems simply by political alliances. While national cooperation is legitimate, globalization and one-world cooperation apart from God is not.

God had given the people a choice before they began to build their tower. He had given them an option to scatter and fill the earth on their own or reject His directive and He would scatter them as a result. But they decided to think more highly of themselves than they ought, so they opted for settling instead. Yet when God came down to see what they were doing and He jumbled up their language and stifled their economy, the people had to stop building. God halted

their progress, since they weren't able to work together anymore. He brought an end to their unity so that they were now fighting against each other because they couldn't communicate. In fact, God shut the whole rebellious plan down. And He wasn't shy about letting them know it was He who did it.

You and I have a decision to make in our land right now. We can either continue in the rebellious trend of our nation apart from God's rule and His favor, or we can challenge our political leaders to return to God willingly and help bring healing to our land. Whether we do it willingly or whether God has to come down and intervene in order to get us right with Him, He will accomplish His goal for His creation. If we choose to cooperate with the process, there will be less chaos along the way. If we don't, we only need to turn on the evening news to see the ongoing results of having it our own way. God still rules the nations.

God is speaking to all nations right now through the various issues we are facing head on. He is telling us that our power can't fix this problem. Through allowing an international, medical pandemic (COVID-19) to affect the whole world, God has clearly demonstrated that He is indeed Ruler of the nations. He is reminding us that money and power can't fix these problems. He is letting us know that notoriety and celebrity won't fix these issues once He decides to move. The reason is because only God can fix what needs to be fixed in our land. Until we figure that out and come right with God as kingdom followers seeking to elect and enact kingdom-based politicians and policies, we can expect a zillion other options of disturbance on our common goals. God won't accept national or global unity apart from Him. He calls for unity that is centered around and stems from Him.

God's goal is for an international theocracy under the lordship of Jesus Christ (Ps. 2:1–12; 1 Cor. 15:24–25). Until then, God will not allow unbelievers to form a world coalition independent of Him. Yet unfortunately, as we have seen, we have lost God as a nation and

international community. We have lost the very connection we have to purpose, meaning, and progress. As a result, everything seems out of order. Everything seems challenging at best. Everything is off. It doesn't make sense. The only way for us to experience redemption as a country and peace in our land is in returning to God. He is not far if we will just recognize His sovereign rule (Acts 17:27).

God wants nations to run back to Him. He wants us to find Him. He wants us to turn from our wicked ways and acknowledge His rightful rule over our lives and societies. God Himself has created a divine disruption because He is giving us a chance for a divine reset. We had better take advantage of this opportunity to return to Him while we still have time so we can advance His kingdom agenda throughout the world. We do this by pursuing a relationship with Him that includes submitting to His ultimate rule. God has been and always will be the Ruler of the nations and He desires that all nations, languages, and people groups praise Him (Rev. 7:9; Ps. 2:10–12).

May God give us another chance as a nation to rally around His kingdom purposes, and may He deliver healing in our land.